1969 a club is born

The township of Churchill as we know it today was in its infancy in 1969 when the Churchill United Soccer Club was founded. Initial discussions and meetings were shared between the kitchen tables and lounge rooms of founding members Tom Sands (SNR) and the club's first President Rod Stewart as they pushed forward to form senior and reserve fledgling teams to compete in the Latrobe Valley Soccer League in 1970. They were joined as co-founders by Bill Canby, Joe Young, Barry Jackson, Günter Binder and Ken Penfold.

The early days were challenging and Churchill had various home grounds before landing at Hazelwood South Reserve on Tramway Rd in the mid 1970's after the Hazelwood (now Churchill) Football Club moved to its new home at Gaskin Park. Temporary bases during the 1970's included a make shift pitch on vacant land between Monash Way and Tramway Rd, then use of a block behind Switchback road in an area later occupied by houses in the Maple and Hawthorn Crescent areas, and a clearing on Manning Drive where the current hockey field is situated (pictured).

The clubs nickname, the Rams, didn't come into wide use until the early 1990's after the club accepted the moniker from legendary LVSL Secretary and soccer scribe Dick Bosma. It's thought Bosma tagged Churchill the Rams after the Jeeralang Rams which folded in 1982, the club having played three seasons in the second and third divisions of the LVSL. Interestingly there was another Churchill and district team, the Hazelwood Cobras, which also competed in the lower grades between 1978 and 1980.

Down the years the club has worn various colour combinations with black and white predominant in the early 1970's, before red and goldy orange was the main stay in the mid to late period of the same decade. In the 1980's the club wore gold, black and red before returning to black and white later that decade. The club made the full transition to it current silver and red combination in 1993 after replicating the Liverpool away strip of the day, a combination that looks set to remain into the future.

When Churchill wore black & white stripes (the first time) playing at our third home on Manning Drive, circa mid 1970's. Black and white returned as club colours for a stint between 1989-1992 before the club settled on non clashing colours silver & red.

Continued….
In 1978 Churchill played off for its first piece of senior silverware when it went down to the League Champions of that year Moe United 4-1 in the final of the Battle of Britain Cup. In the true tradition and romance of the Cup Churchill made its way to the final despite finishing seventh on the ladder in 1978.

Two years later in 1980 Churchill went close to snatching its first senior League Championship when it missed out by a point to Sale City and Traralgon City respectively who were separated by goal difference at season's end. Needing a win on the final day to overhaul Sale City, Churchill could only manage a draw with rivals Fortuna 2-2 in a year when the Morwell club finished second from the bottom.

Churchill has remained in the first division since its inception and has always been noted for its commitment to junior development, but in 1990 the club hit its lowest point when it finished bottom and was forced to play a relegation match against undefeated second division Champions Morwell Rangers/ Loy Yang Condors United.

Effectively fighting for its survival Churchill blazed away to win 8-0 in the first leg of the decider with the Combine understandably conceding the second leg with such a deficit to overhaul. From here it was onwards and upwards for the club as they set about building from the ground up with a renewed drive and emphasis on junior programs.

Pushing into the top four in 1991 for the first time since 1985 the club continued its climb by collecting its first senior silverware with the Charity Bowl in 1993 with a 2-1 over Moe United in the final and also finished runners up in the Battle of Britain Cup after losing to Morwell Falcons 2-0 in the final. The following year Churchill pressed for the League title but would finish second to Traralgon Olympians.

In 1998 Churchill cracked it for major success when it won the Battle of Britain Cup for the first time and also finished runner up League Champions after losing an epic 4-3 decider to Warragul United when the Championship was contested in a finals series.

The club craved the League Championship but would try and finish bridesmaid again in 2005 and 2006 to Fortuna, with a single point deciding the winner in 2006. Despite these disappointments in 2005 Churchill claimed a major trophy when it defeated Fortuna in the Premiership Final after a making its way through a three week series to qualify.

Finally in 2007 Churchill broke through after 38 years of trying. Quite fittingly the feat was achieved with players predominantly developed at the club and adding to the milestone the team went through undefeated with an average winning margin of 5.7 goals.

Since 2005 Churchill have collected eight senior trophies with a record equalling three Battle of Britain Cup titles in a row 2005, 2006 & 2007; the Premiership in 2005; the Charity Bowl in 2007 and 2008; and the aforementioned League Championship in 2007 and again in 2008 forming a golden era for the club.

In 2009 the club marked its anniversary in style with a gutsy defence of the coveted League Champions title for a third consecutive year. In a backs against the wall display the team needed to defeat Fortuna in the second last round of its season and did so with a goal in the last minute, returning some of the pain inflicted by the Morwell club over the years.

The club has also been a pioneer for the development of girls and women's stand alone Gippsland leagues driving there establishment by encouraging female participation for nearly ten years now and in 2009 club stalwarts and female participation champions Nigel Browne and Adrian Huizer were recognised by the GSL for their contribution with the naming of the women's cup as the *Browne-Huizer Trophy*.

Off the field the crowning moment occurred in February 2008 when new social rooms and undercover spectator viewing area were officially opened after six years of fund raising and volunteer labour.

In the coming year the club is looking forward to the installation of match standard lighting and a ball net on the Tramway Rd boundary. Also in years to come the club hopes to improve access and parking to the reserve and is buoyed by the support it receives from the Latrobe City Council.